



**For immediate release
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STATE BEACH FACILITIES TO OPEN THIS WEEKEND

Spray pools and wading pools also will open

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) plans to open designated swimming areas at most of the state's ocean and fresh-water beaches this Saturday, May 24, the start of the Memorial Day weekend.

Lifeguards will be on duty at many beaches this weekend and on upcoming weekends until late June, when guards will begin staffing the beaches on weekdays as well. DCR operates more than 80 fresh-water and salt-water beaches across Massachusetts.

Spray pools and wading pools at many of DCR's urban parks also will open this Saturday, and on June 21, the agency's 29 deep-water swimming pools are scheduled to open. In general, the pools will be open 10 a.m.-7 p.m. daily, staying open an hour later than in previous years. The extra hour will provide additional time for special programming, such as family swims and children's swimming lessons. Admission to all state pools and beaches is free, though parking fees ranging from \$3 to \$7 are charged at most beaches.

"The summer recreation season is arriving and our beaches will be ready," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "Thanks to a generous allocation from the Legislature this year, DCR is hiring additional personnel and buying new equipment for our urban ocean beaches, and we are going to great lengths to assure that the experience of all our beach visitors is the very best."

Part of waterfront safety is safe water. During the beach season, water samples are taken regularly from each beach and tested, according to state regulations, for unhealthy bacteria. If bacteria levels are found to be excessively high, a swimming advisory is posted at the beach. A red flag indicates swimming is not advisable; a blue flag indicates the water is considered safe for swimming.

Also, please remember that during the beach season, dogs are not permitted on state beaches, even on a leash.

For a full list of Massachusetts state beaches and pools, visit mass.gov/dcr and click on "activities."

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DCR officials urge swimmers to exercise caution and follow these basic safety tips:

1. Swim within designated swimming areas only.
2. Be sure children are monitored by a parent or guardian at all times. Young children should be no more than an arm's reach away.
3. Learn how to swim. Both parents and children should learn how to swim.
4. Read and obey all rules and educational signs.
5. Beware of getting too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, or too much strenuous activity.
6. Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Stop swimming at the first sign of bad weather.
7. Enter the water feet first.
8. Do not mix alcohol with swimming, diving, or boating. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance, and coordination and diminishes your swimming skills. Alcohol is prohibited on all DCR properties.
9. Know how to prevent, recognize, and respond to emergencies.
10. Practice sun safety as well as water safety: Always wear sunscreen, seek shelter when possible, and drink lots of fluids.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.

